

NOTE ON THE HABITS OF *SPHENOPHORUS*
PONTEDERIÆ CHTTN.

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In late August of 1924 the ponds of eastern Massachusetts were very low and in some instances dry because of a long drought. In two ponds in Stoughton and Easton beds of pickerel weed (*Pontederia cordata* L.) outside water level were brown and dying, while other plants nearby, although not any more supplied with pond water than the dying ones, were apparently healthy. Investigation showed that the dead patches of plants were heavily infested with larvæ, pupæ, and newly emerged adults of *Sphenophorus pontederiae* Chttn. The thick rootstocks were completely hollowed out and rotten, and each plant contained several larvæ or pupæ. So disintegrated were these plants that when one took hold of the leaves and stalks they separated at once from the rootstock. The larvæ were most frequently found tunneling the rootstocks, but when they became mature they generally bored up into the flowering stem an inch or two above the earth to pupate.

In several stalks a dipterous puparium was found beside the remains of the larva, plainly a parasite of *Sphenophorus*. The adult fly that emerged has been identified by Dr. J. M. Aldrich as *Lixophaga variabilis* Coq. This parasite, closely allied to the parasite (*Lixophaga diatrææ* Tns.) of the sugar-cane borer (*Diatræa saccharalis* Fab.) has been reared in one instance, according to Dr. Aldrich, from *Lixus scrobicollis* Lec. at Dallas, Tex. In another case a carabid larva was found feeding on a pupa. Several carabid and staphylinid beetles also occurred suspiciously near the infested plants.